

Available Options

This brochure provides information on how to pursue issues and complaints against CPUC-regulated utilities through the Formal Complaint process and the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process.

A Formal Complaint is a written legal document, which sets forth your claim. A Formal Complaint requires a specific format and filing process, which is detailed in the CPUC's **Rules of Practice and Procedure**, available at: www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/documents/codelawspolicies.htm.

ADR may be used in conjunction with a Formal Complaint, and in some cases, may be available before a Formal Complaint is filed. The early use of ADR may save time, money, and avoid the complexities of the formal process.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

ADR commonly describes processes, such as facilitation, negotiation, mediation, and early neutral evaluation to help disputants resolve a conflict without a formal decision by a court or agency. When successful, ADR may achieve results that a court or agency could not order, give the parties more ownership in the result, and reduce litigation and agency costs.

The Administrative Law Judge Division administers the ADR program. Trained, experienced judges serve as "neutrals" - mediators and facilitators - in the program.

To request ADR, you can ask the judge assigned to the initial formal proceeding, file a written request, contact the ADR coordinator, or contact the Public Advisor's Office for assistance. To obtain information on all aspects of ADR, please visit the CPUC Alternative Dispute Resolution webpage at: www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/adr.



Learn more about ADR!

Scan the code to find more information about the ADR Program.



Formal and Informal Resolution Series #2

Filing a Formal Complaint & Alternative Dispute Resolution at the CPUC

This brochure provides an overview of CPUC practices. Anyone who would like to participate in a CPUC proceeding must follow the CPUC's **Rules of Practice and Procedure**, available at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/rpp/>

Contact Information for the Public Advisor's Office

E-mail: public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov
Toll free: 866-849-8390 or 415-703-2074
TTY: 866-836-7825
Address:
CPUC Public Advisor Office
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

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www.cpuc.ca.gov



CPUC Assistance with Formal Complaints

Through the Formal Complaint process, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) can order the utility to take corrective action on a variety of issues, including an adjustment to a customer's bill. The CPUC can also order reparations (if a service, which has been paid for, has not been provided) and impose fines.

Before filing a Formal Complaint customers may try to resolve the complaint informally. For more information, read the *Resolving an Issue with a Utility: The CPUC's Informal Process* brochure.

Filing a Formal Complaint

Formal Complaint Process

1. Fill out the form for filing a Formal Complaint provided on the CPUC website at www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/aboutus/Divisions/CSID/Public+Advisor/ or request a paper copy at the Public Advisor's Office.
2. Submit the completed form to the CPUC Docket Office by mail at: 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
3. The Docket Office will notify you if there are errors and explain how to correct them.
4. When accepted, the complaint will be assigned a case number that must be included on all correspondences.
5. The Docket Office will mail a copy of the Formal Complaint to the defendant utility with instructions to answer.
6. The utility will send you a copy of its answer to your complaint.
7. The judge will schedule a Prehearing Conference (PHC) to set a hearing schedule.
8. After the PHC, a hearing will be held to present evidence.
9. If the complaint is an Expedited Complaint (is less than \$10,000), the hearing will be within 30 days, there will be no court reporter and a hearing transcript is not prepared, and attorneys may not represent either party.
10. If the complaint is a Regular Formal Complaint (is over \$10,000) or requested to be considered as a Regular Complaint by the Complainant, there may be a court reporter and a hearing transcript and attorneys may represent the parties.
11. The judge will issue a Presiding Officer's Decision (POD).
12. If either party appeals the POD, it will be submitted for review and vote by the Commission.
13. If there is no appeal, the POD becomes the final decision.



California Public Utilities Commission

Consumer Service & Information Division



Privacy Notice

All Formal Complaints filed with the CPUC become public record and may be posted on the CPUC website. Therefore, any information you provide in the Formal Complaint, including, but not limited to, your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number, e-mail address, and the facts of your case, may be available online for later public viewing.

Additional Information

It is important to note that the CPUC is not allowed to award damages for such things as personal injury, property damage, emotional distress, or loss of wages or profits. To request compensation for damages, the customer must file a claim in a civil court.